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## **Gilbert Seeks Federal Funds for American Red Cross Armed Forces Emergency Services**

**(LANSING)** – The American Red Cross is in need of continued funds to support their humanitarian efforts and today state Senator Jud Gilbert, R-Algonac, introduced a resolution urging Congress to appropriate those funds.

Senate Resolution 71 seeks funding for the American Red Cross Armed Forces Emergency Services (AFES) in the National Defense Authorization Act and the Department of Defense Appropriations Act for fiscal year 2004.

“For over a century the American Red Cross has served as a link between the people of the United States and their Armed Forces,” Gilbert said. “These funds are necessary to help fund costs associated with AFES emergency communications and staff mobilization and deployment. The Red Cross and Congress can no longer rely on charitable contributions from the American public to support Operation Enduring Freedom, the war on terrorism and the Iraq conflict, especially during the current economic downturn.”

The Red Cross AFES program maintains a global emergency communications network supported by 392 employees and 28,000 volunteers located at 961 chapters across the nation, on 108 military installations around the world, and at two AFES Centers located in Fort Still, Oklahoma and Fort Church, Virginia.

In addition to providing medical care, American Red Cross workers visit hospitals and remote locations delivering messages to soldiers in urgent situations, such as serious illness or death of a family member or the birth of a child, along with gifts from grateful Americans to lift the spirits of our soldiers who are deployed abroad.

According to SR 71, Michigan’s 26 Red Cross chapters and its work on three installations provided emergency communications assistance to 6,238 military personnel and their families in fiscal year 2002. Since last July, the American Red Cross in Michigan has seen a 43 percent increase in the number of military cases served over last year.